

ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

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Memorandum

To: ENRP Co-Chairs Bradley Erck & Barry Weinstein, MD

From: Tourism & Culture Subcommittee Chair John Greenan

Re: March & April 2002 meetings

Date: April 26, 2002

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership's Tourism & Culture Subcommittee met March 26, 2002 at the Buffalo-Niagara CVB and April 19, 2002 at the Niagara Falls CVB. Present for the March meeting were subcommittee members Greenan, Blanchard, Davignon, Keyes, Casale, Geiger (proxy), and Rydelek (proxy), as well as Charlene Ritter-Lester from Erie County Environment & Planning and Robert Gower of the NFTA. Present for the April meeting were subcommittee members Greenan, Blanchard, Dale, Davignon, Keyes, Casale, and Rydelek (proxy), as well as Ritter-Lester and Gower.

Buffalo-Niagara Tourist Express:

Although considered successful in its inception last year, the Tourist Express will be put on hold this year in order to take the time to more thoroughly develop the routes and advertising needed to make it a more viable long term project. To that end, members are looking at possible stops for the Express between downtown Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Possible developments with the Olmsted Crescent, a trolley service in downtown Niagara Falls, and casino gaming will be monitored, as these offer possible stops for the Express. Private tour operators will also be factored into the equation. The subcommittee will also work to make sure the service is integrated into the CVBs' visitor guides for 2003.

Tourist Signage

One major problem identified by the subcommittee is the lack of signage pointing out tourist destinations in the two counties, especially on highways. **The Tourism & Culture Subcommittee is seeking concept approval to pursue developing more extensive tourism signage in Erie and Niagara Counties.** As a first step, the subcommittee will inventory current signage and develop a priority list for additional sign locations. In the meantime, the subcommittee chair will begin meeting with the New York State Department of Transportation on the matter.

Joint Visitor Guides

Revisiting an idea brought up last year, the subcommittee agreed that developing one visitor guide for the two counties would be desirable. Due to competing hotel interests, however, it is impractical to pursue the effort at this time.

Other Topics

Other topics discussed included the Regional Cultural Tourism Program's Concierge Services effort, the GBNRTC's Transportation Enhancement Project list, the Visiting Friends and Family program, and the new tourism agency being formed in Niagara County.